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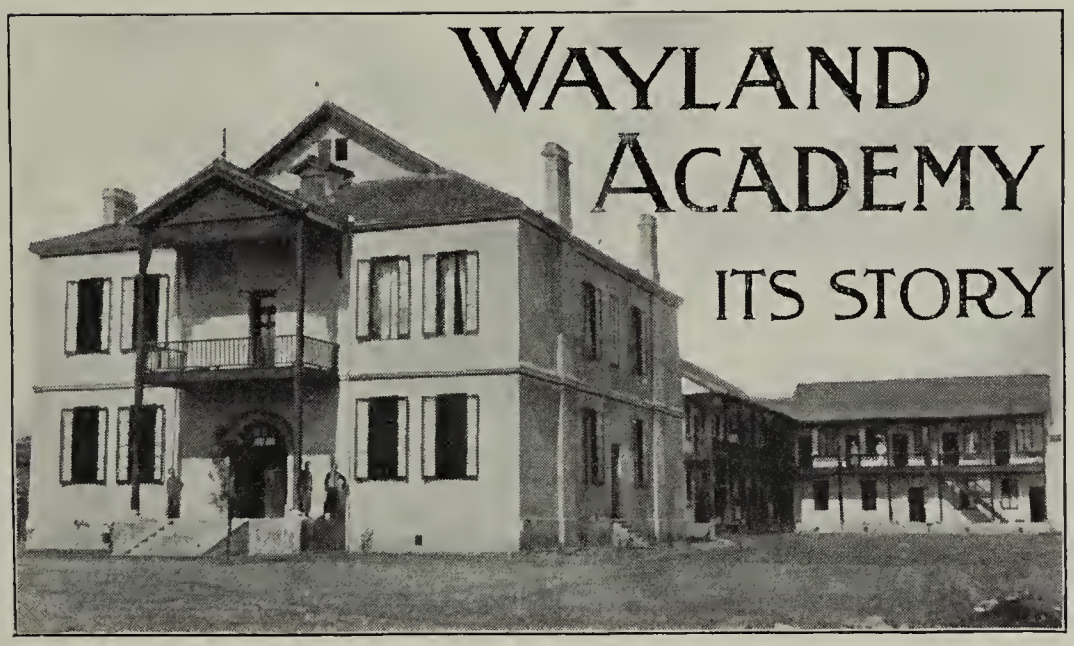
Wayland Academy

ITS STORY

By Rev. W. S. Sweet, Hangchow, China

ONE OF THE DORMITORY ROOMS

American Baptist Missionary Union
FORD BUILDING, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



EVEN though Confucian teaching is of a very high order, yet in its practical results it produced a people so materialistic and selfish that it was impossible for them to conceive that the preaching of the gospel was not the outward part of a deeply laid plan of foreign countries to get control of the flowery kingdom. The schools and hospitals in China have done more to remove this delusion than any other form of Christian work. When the Chinese saw people freely healed and thoroughly educated, who were not compelled to believe the doctrine, it gradually opened their hearts and minds to an unselfish religion.

The conversion of the Chinese has been a difficult task, but no more difficult than the conversion of the Saxon would have been, and only argues the stability of the race when once really in the light. Let us recall the fact that when all the Saxons were worshiping Thor and Woden and waging bloodthirsty wars, the educated Chinese were giving themselves to

literary criticism and the perfecting of a political government which has withstood all attempts of destruction from without and tendencies of disintegration from within. The superiority of the product of this intellectual exercise is manifest in the following facts: the empire has not been absorbed as has the American Indian; the leading bankers of Japan are Chinese; the American, the Englishman, and the Spaniard in the Philippines, are finding in the Chinaman their equal in the race for commercial superiority. The reason the Chinese are such poor soldiers is that during the past ages, in story and in poetry, the military man has been the butt of ridicule. Because of this, many say the Chinese are not given to wars. This is not the case, as there have scarcely been fifty years during all their history in which peace has not been broken by general war or many riots among the clans. Because of this superiority of the Chinese, it is not strange that schools and the education of the Western countries should appeal to them and be the entering wedge that has broken the seclusion of these ages.

Growth of Mission Schools

Before missionaries were allowed to enter China, Messrs. Morrison and Brown upon adjoining islands gathered Chinese children into their day schools. Thus began seventy years or more of faithful teaching in the mission schools. In order to get pupils they were often paid for coming. As high a price as their board, books and clothing has been given. Out of these schools have come men who have been interpreters in many a magistrate's office and helpers in

the customs and post-offices all over China. Perhaps the most brilliant example is Wu Ting Fang, the ex-Chinese minister at Washington.

The second stage in the growth of mission schools was the period in which tuition could be charged. Schools could get anywhere from ten to one hundred and fifty dollars a year. As board ranged from three to four cents a day, many schools, aside from teachers' salaries, were self-supporting. As positions in stores, customs, post-offices and government offices increased, there was a boom and every Chinaman wanted to get a Western education.

At this time our first academy was organized at Hangchow and called after our Wisconsin school, "Wayland Academy." Our beginning was in buildings made of mud, leaned up against the walls of our neighbors, and our one recitation room was the sitting room in our temporary home. Twenty-four pupils came to such quarters, and without Baptist men for teachers, without any appropriation for school work, and really without anything that could be called a building, we worked on for four years. We charged seven dollars and fifty cents for a term of five months, and when the second term began, our attendance ran up to sixty. We saved enough to build a little schoolhouse twenty by thirty feet, having a recitation room below and four dormitory rooms above.

During this time we built our home, and the attendance having increased to 117 we gave up all the first story of our house for recitation rooms and built a long shed of posts set in the ground, covered with one fourth inch siding and roofed with tile, for a dormitory. When Mr. Millard and family came and

TEMPORARY DORMITORY

we needed all our house to share with them, another shed was built for recitation rooms. The school shifted and suffered in these quarters, while the hope was constantly cherished, "We will surely have new buildings next year."

Buildings for Wayland Academy

One Sabbath day when our Bible classes were reciting in this shed, a boy pushed open the rickety door of my room and handed me a telegram. I hastily tore it open and read, "Your buildings are assured." For the time I could not speak and tears of thankfulness came unbidden before the class. When I could trust myself to speak, the telegram was translated and I said, "Let us thank God." I knelt, and with me every boy in the room, heathen and Christian, knelt before God and lifted to him thankful praise. We knew not from whom the money came, but if those who gave could have seen us there in tears, surely it would have proven that their gift was appreciated most deeply.

When the school gathered for a review of the

Sunday school lesson, we gave ourselves up to praise and testimony. One of the native teachers said: "We have waited so long for these buildings that I began to doubt whether we would ever have them. I am sorry I doubted and this gives me new faith in prayer." Another said: "The gift of all this money for the benefit and education of our Chinese deeply impresses me. If Christianity does this for America, we need the gospel most of all." We closed with "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," sung in Chinese, but it was just as acceptable and expressive as was ever sung in any language.

The hand of God was manifest in giving us two or three acres of land joining our compound, which was once occupied by one of the largest Buddhist temples in the city but was destroyed by the Taiping rebels. This cost us less than $500. It was in the heart of a city of a million people. Within a year from this time temple property could not be bought by foreigners at any price. On this temple ground, once given to the worship of idols but now to be given to Christian education, our academy, fifty-five feet square, and our dormitory seventy-five by forty-two feet were erected. One of the old sheds was removed and used for a dining room for another year and a half, when we had the pleasure of erecting a dining hall fifty by twenty feet.

A Period of Reaction

Just before we removed to our new buildings, the school insurrection period swept over China. For ages the teacher had been a despot in his school and had been reverenced as a god. The spirit of liberty

was rising and showed itself in an outbreak of disobedience and disrespect for the authority of the teacher. This was fanned by the great mass of daily papers that had sprung up, and societies were organized which furnished funds and teachers for pupils who would leave school and set up by themselves. The object evidently was to foster a feeling of rebellion so that the present dynasty could be set aside.

This spirit came into our school and our main Chinese teacher, not a Christian, perceived the trouble and suddenly left on a pretense of attending a wedding, but with the determination not to return. It was very difficult to fill his place in the middle of the term, and thus our teaching force was crippled and difficulty in the Chinese classes began which needed repression. Then the pupils began to manifest great hatred toward the religious instruction, which called forth the need of reprimand; later there was trouble regarding the school cook, and one evening several boys came, one after the other, saying they wished to leave. This was my first inkling of a combine. Not a single teacher had told me. It was then I needed Baptist helpers upon whose shoulders and hearts the welfare of the school rested; but as this was our first school of higher grade there was not a native in the mission prepared to fill such a position. Just then every spare moment of my time out of class was engaged in buying the land and contracting for the erection of the buildings. The crisis came unawares. That evening I went out and found fifty in the combine, but sixty were true to the school. The next day when they left, but one Christian boy went with them. It threw the school

into a most terrible condition. Religious work was stopped and a spirit of deep hatred for the missionary teachers was manifest on every hand. The difficulty of managing the school had increased a hundred-fold. This was the condition at Wayland, which was repeated in very many schools, and even theological seminaries, throughout the empire. The Provincial University, a Chinese school in our city, was nearly ruined and did not have recitations again for over a year. Many country schools were closed, never to be opened. The spirit continued for several terms and probably brought itself to an end by a great insurrection among the students in Japan. The school authorities there tried to break up the evil influences among the Chinese students by making a rule that the boarding places of the students should be determined by the president of the school they were attending. Nearly 6,000 students left Japan and returned to China. China then saw that this attitude would wreck the new educational system that was to take the place of the ancient examinations which the empress dowager had swept away by her famous edict. The pendulum was swinging the other way and Chinese students became more manageable.

The Short-Cut Craze

Another fad swept over the empire which may be known as the "short-cut craze." In China, where it was not strange to see grandfather, father and son in the same examination, where a man was a student even to old age, there was confidence that an education that would take an American from six to ten years to get, a Chinaman could obtain in six months.

SCHOOL IN SESSION — RE

Japan lent herself to this craze and hundreds of men went there for six months or a year and returned, as they thought, fully prepared to become leaders in the reformation of their country. Our governor sent a number of young men to Japan who had never even opened an arithmetic; after they had been there six months he ordered them to change their course of instruction so they could return at the end of the year to survey and superintend the construction of a railroad from Hangchow to Shanghai. So many of these men secured positions that it was very difficult for our schools to hold pupils to a full course. Many boys came to our school who would have thought three dollars a month good wages, who after two

W. S. SWEET, PRINCIPAL

years could get from twenty to fifty dollars a month. The failures of these men soon caused the officials to prize a man with a diploma, and the schools of China settled down upon a solid basis. Where there had been hatred before, a kindly feeling came to exist and an obedient spirit took the place of disobedience. Thorough work was desired instead of a smattering. Again it was a pleasure to do school work.

Native schools sprang up and the educational evangel flourished. In Hangchow, which is typical of all the cities of China, there was the provincial school opened by the governor. The mayor opened a school; each of the district magistrates and many wealthy merchants had their own schools for which

they erected fine buildings. Two girls' schools were started by the gentry and many primary schools were opened by the governor as feeders to the university. In a country district where one of our church members, Mr. Ching, lived, a Japanese got possession of a large tract of land under contract to run a school. After the deeds were signed, he sold the property to the Roman Catholics. Mr. Ching got up a subscription and bought the property back for $300, and, organized a school which at last accounts was doing well.

The Hangchow Girls' School

At this time the wish for a girls' school, long repressed in the heart of Mrs. Sweet, was realized. The quarters occupied by the boys' school at first, then vacant, and being far removed from the new buildings occupied by the boys, could be used for the girls. Coeducation would be utterly impossible in China at present. Just at this time a girl from one of the better families, a sister-in-law of our head Chinese teacher in the boys' school, came to us and desired instruction. Mrs. Sweet went to the other missions only to find that their girls' schools could not take even one other pupil. This seemed to be God's leading and we advertised a girls' school. There were twelve pupils the first term; the second term the attendance increased to over twenty. It was found necessary, because of the marriage of Miss McDonald, to close the girls' school which she and Miss Dutirle had opened at an outstation, and when these pupils came into the city the attendance was increased to over thirty.

The first pupil mentioned above, after a year's training, was converted and baptized. She became a good helper but was soon stricken with consumption and passed on to finish her training above. Another bright pupil became our helper, who when we came to America was taken to Shanghai to finish her education, in the hope that when we return she will be

GIRLS' SCHOOL, HANGCHOW

ready to enter the teaching staff of our school. The niece of the governor of Soochow attended the school a year, but because she loved the gospel was removed to another school by her father. One day she visited us and asked Mrs. Sweet to join her in prayer that she might return to our school. They knelt and prayed together and she went away with a light heart. Letters from Mrs. Millard, who has charge of the school, say that she is in school and a band of teachers and pupils are praying that her father, the superintendent of the Confucian temple ceremonies, may be brought to Christ. The school is under the

care of the Woman's Baptist Foreign Missionary Society of the West, who hope ere long to send out a young lady to take charge. The need of buildings to properly house this school, we believe, will be supplied as soon as the missionary is prepared to take charge of it.

The entire method of teaching is changed. Books are now prepared by the Chinese like our reading books, whereby the children may learn their own language by easy grades, instead of learning the most difficult classics when they first enter school.

One Thing Lacking

Although China was professedly open to the gospel, yet the peculiar opposition of the educated classes to the religion of Jesus Christ was manifested by a rigid rule in all Chinese schools that Confucius should be worshiped the first and fifteenth of every month. For this reason many missionaries left the public schools and all Christian students were practically ruled out. As all political preferment came through these native schools, Christian men were debarred from office. This caused much disadvantage to the Christian student, and finally a committee of missionaries from the Educational Society was appointed to consult with the ministers of the various powers, and through them the Chinese Government, regarding the removal of this ban and to secure government recognition for mission schools. At this time the results of the work of this committee are unknown; but it is a very important move and should call forth prayer, for in this decision the empire will move toward or away from the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

The First Commencement

Our first commencement was held just before the Chinese New Year, January 7–11, 1906. The Chinese guests of honor were the president of the foreign bureau, the mayor of the city, the provincial superintendent of schools, the Japanese consul and vice-consul and a representative from the American consulate. There were many guests from the wealthy class. Our chapel was crowded full, as was our home at the afternoon tea served at the close of the exercises. Many of these officials came into touch with the work of missions for the first time, and who can tell the amount of prejudice that was broken down? This is a specific case, but all over the empire these commencements make an impression on officials of every grade and on other classes who perhaps could not be reached by Christian influence in any other way.

The class that will complete the course next January is made up of five young men. One is the son of an official, two are members of the Church Mission Society, and another is the son of a wealthy family at Mosan. The fifth is one of our Baptist men who, without means, has worked his way through school. For the last three years he has really been our general manager, teaching any and all classes both in English and Chinese that seemed to have no regular teacher. Of those who have graduated, one is our science teacher and the other teaches mathematics.

The educational force exerted by the missionary body today may be stated in figures as follows: day schools, 1,350, with 23,000 pupils; boarding

schools, 278, with 13,600 pupils, and 14 colleges, of which 12 are supported by American missionary societies. Morally and spiritually this influence cannot be computed in reaching the official and literary classes of society, and in lifting many children of the poorer classes to positions of respectability and influence.

Spiritual Results

There has been a constant work of grace in the academy and fifteen young men have been won to Christ and turned toward Christian work, while ten Christian boys have been fitted for more efficient work. One of these was teaching in an adjoining district in a native school. After a year's work, two of his pupils came to Wayland with hearts prepared to receive the gospel and were baptized during their first year. Other pupils who are teaching in Shaohsing, Huchow and other places have sent their pupils to us and the influence of the school is felt over a wide territory. Many of our pupils are the sons of officials and one of these has boldly confessed his faith and been baptized.

One of the strong influences for God is the young men's Christian association summer schools for college students, — a kind of Northfield repeated on Chinese soil. Among the distinguished young men that attended last year was the secretary of the railroad commissioner, an interpreter to one of the viceroys, professors from the Shensi University and St. John's College, and men from the secretarial staff of the Chinese customs. One of the most impressive features of the meetings was the discussion of the question, "Why I entered Christian work," par-

ticipated in by a large number of young missionaries. This was followed by a consecration service, in which many students, one interpreter and a customs' secretary, pledged to give their lives to Christian service. There are four of these summer schools held every year in different parts of China.

Definite Needs of Wayland

Our present enrolment is ninety and we have dormitory accommodations for but fifty-six. The academy building is not arranged for laboratory work and we need a thoroughly furnished science hall. In order that the school may come under the influence of the local church, we must have a larger church building. The mission teachers have good homes, but our native teachers at present have nothing but native houses of the poorest kind. Three semi-American homes should be built for the native teachers. This will do much toward drawing to us and holding teachers of good ability. With these improvements, which will cost from $12,000 to $18,000, our school will be ready to help China in her rapid progress toward civilization and power.

The educational plan of our mission is to establish day schools in every station, a boarding school wherever a missionary family resides, Wayland Academy at Hangchow with its four years' course of study, and the union college soon to be opened in Shanghai. Through our schools we have reached the higher classes, and the lower classes have been elevated. Indeed, too much emphasis cannot be laid on Christian schools in China.

" It would be interesting to know how many of the

students of the mission schools have been led to embrace the Christian religion, but even if this were disappointing, we still can see that the pupils who come under the instruction of these schools can hardly fail to have misconceptions removed and to have some appreciation for the great religious ideas contained in the teaching of Jesus Christ." It has been said that "Christianity entered Japan through the school." We think it may be said without exaggeration that much of the work of preparing China to understand the Christian religion has been performed quietly and silently in our mission schools.

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